

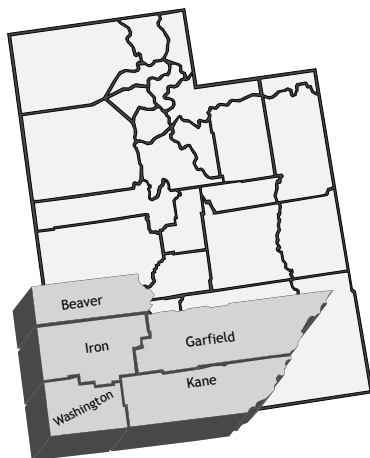
# Workforce News



A quarterly publication of the Department of Workforce Services: issued September 2009

**Southwest:** Beaver, Garfield, Iron, Kane, Washington

**jobs.utah.gov**



## “You Can’t Always Get What You Want, But. . .”

By Lecia Parks Langston, Economist

The Rolling Stones got it right. “You can’t always get what you want.” We understand. You’d like your economic data faster, better, quicker. Here at the Utah Department of Workforce Services Workforce Information Division, we’d love to give you that “real-time” data you so passionately desire. After all, we’re probably the biggest data geeks around. Unfortunately, the realities of data collection, estimation and tabulation result in information that is ultimately less timely than ideal.

However, we know that particularly during recessionary interludes, the importance of tracking your area’s economic performance escalates—but we publish this newsletter only once a quarter. To help you in your quest to understand your county’s current economic conditions, we’ve put together a two-page economic update which can be updated and accessed on-line as quickly as data becomes available.

### It’s an Up-to-Date Snapshot

Keep in mind that on the county level, few economic indicators are available. Here’s a list of those we’re able to track on a monthly or quarterly basis:

- Change in Nonfarm Employment
- Unemployment Rates
- Initial Claims of Unemployment Insurance
- Residential and Nonresidential Building Permits
- Gross Taxable Sales

A “Current Economic Snapshot” for each county tracking these very important county-level indicators is now available on our website. (For an example, see the graphic that accompanies this article.) So, instead of waiting

*(continued)*

### Inside:

- › **Beaver:** Minor Job Losses
- › **Garfield:** Boom Evaporates
- › **Iron:** Manufacturing Contracts
- › **Kane:** Recession Strikes
- › **Washington:** Hitting Bottom?

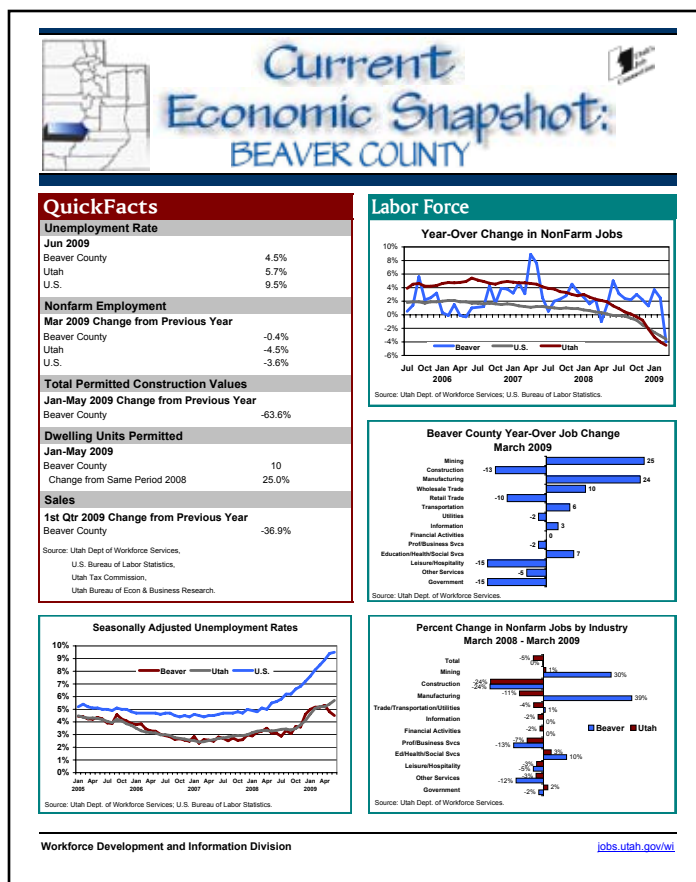


Contact the author, your regional economist, with any questions on content:

Lecia Parks Langston  
435-688-3115  
lecialangston@utah.gov

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# "You Can't Always Get What You Want, But. . ." (continued)



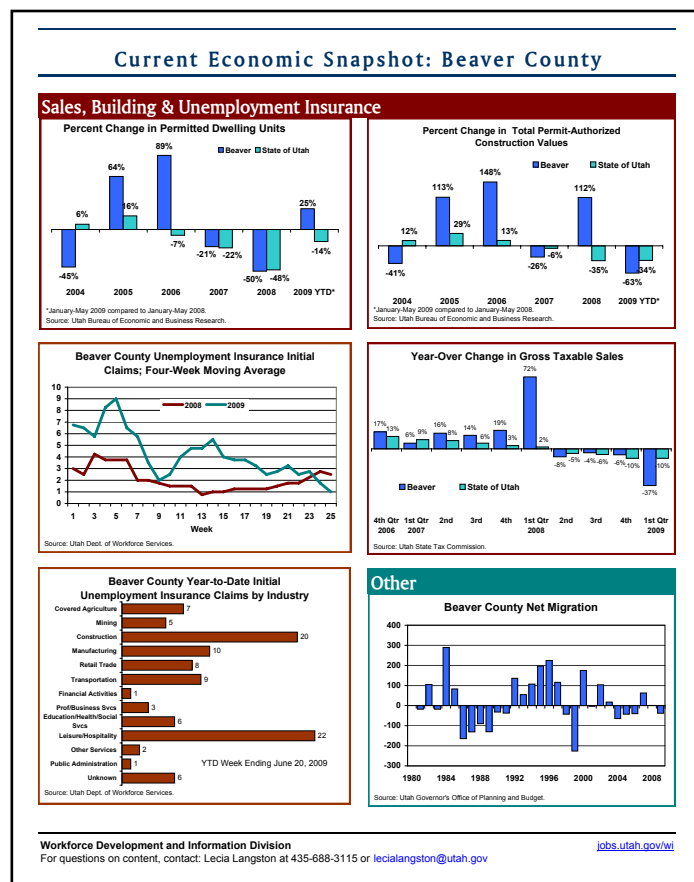
for this newsletter to make its way into your mailbox once a quarter, you can quickly check the health of your county at your leisure.

## Just a Few Reminders

Of course, the change in nonfarm jobs is the most important indicator. Although this data is available for counties in this region only once a quarter, it provides the quickest and most accurate signal of economic health or decline. Are your counties' job losses increasing? Your economy

probably hasn't stopped contracting yet. On the other hand, are job losses getting smaller? Your county has probably hit the bottom of the business cycle.

Also, this snapshot includes some unemployment insurance claims data you might not have seen before. Keep in mind that the unemployment rates include far more individuals than those who are collecting unemployment insurance. Unemployment rates estimates



encompass any one who is not currently employed and looking for work.

## Where Can You Find this Economic Snapshot?

Accessing this information is as close as the nearest internet connection. Our website is [jobs.utah.gov](http://jobs.utah.gov). Click on "Economic Information" and then "County Info." Finally, if you have questions about your local economy, feel free to contact your regional economist (me). **WFN**

# Quick Facts

June 2009 Rate and Percentage Point Change from Previous Year

## Unadjusted Unemployment Rate

	Rate	Change
Beaver County	4.5%	0.6
Garfield County	7.7%	1.9
Iron County	6.6%	2.5
Kane County	5.9%	2.1
Washington County	7.3%	3.0
Utah	5.7%	2.4
U.S.	9.5%	3.9

March 2009 Change from Previous Year

## Job Growth

Beaver County	-0.4%
Garfield County	-0.5%
Iron County	-6.0%
Kane County	-5.4%
Washington County	-9.3%
Utah	-4.5%
U.S.	-3.6%

January-May 2009 Change from Previous Year

## Permitted Construction Values

Beaver County	-63.6%
Garfield County	-77.3%
Iron County	-62.4%
Kane County	-40.4%
Washington County	-47.4%
Utah	-33.7%

1st Quarter 2009 Change from Previous Year

## Sales

Beaver County	-36.9%
Garfield County	-16.4%
Iron County	-15.8%
Kane County	-21.3%
Washington County	-11.2%
Utah	-9.5%

Source: Utah Dept of Workforce Services, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Utah Tax Commission,  
Bureau of Econ & Business Research.

## What's Up?

### "Raser Technologies

**Inc.** says it has qualified for government-backed loans to triple the size of a geothermal power plant 15 miles west of Minersville in Beaver County. Officials say the company could be awarded \$150 million in government-backed loan guarantees by late summer."

—The Salt Lake Tribune

"The Syrett family, owners of the 368-room lodge that has housed hundreds of thousands of guests since opening in 1923, has opened the **Bryce Canyon Grand Hotel**, a 164-room facility and **Ebenezer's Barn and Grill** across Utah Highway 63 from Ruby's Inn. Both are **Best Western** hotels."

—The Deseret News

"A brand new four-mile stretch of roadway, the **Southern Parkway (State Route 7)**, was recently completed. The four-lane divided highway starts at Interstate 15's Exit 2 and extends east to St. George's River Road. This \$58.5 million project, however, is only the first of several phases for SR 7."

—The Salt Lake Tribune

# County News

## Beaver County

Recently released nonfarm jobs data for the first quarter of 2009 shows Beaver County finally succumbed to state and national recessionary forces. Beaver County experienced robust job growth during most of 2008 and carried that expansion into the first two months of 2009. However, even though the county stopped creating jobs in March 2009, its year-to-year decline proved barely worth mentioning—a mere 0.4 percent. Covered agricultural employment (not included in the nonfarm job totals) took a notable 6-percent dip.

As in most areas of the U.S., construction employment took the brunt of the county's job losses. In addition, retail trade, leisure/hospitality services, and the public sector also experienced employment losses. On the other hand, manufacturing and mining added almost enough new positions to counteract the declines in other industries.

Beaver County's unemployment rate seems to have topped out in first quarter 2009. Its June 2009 jobless figure of 4.5 percent compares favorably against state (5.7 percent) and national (9.5 percent) averages.

Home permitting in Beaver County is actually up 25 percent for the first five months of 2009. Conversely, nonresidential permit values for the same time period dropped substantially. However, this decline resulted from unusually heavy permitting during the first five months of 2008. The same pattern holds true for the large gross taxable sales drop in first quarter 2009—unusual business expenditures skewed comparable first-quarter 2008 figures.

## Garfield County

Garfield County, too, saw employment gains evaporate during the first quarter of 2009. During 2008, the county experienced a wild double-digit growth rate ride as leisure/hospitality services employment skyrocketed. Tourism-related jobs and retail trade jobs still showed expansion during first quarter 2009. However, a sizeable decrease in manufacturing employment more than offset those gains. Overall, between March 2008 and March 2009, the county lost nine positions for a year-over decline of 0.5 percent.

Garfield County's June 2009 unemployment rate measured 7.7 percent—nestled right between the state and national averages. Seasonal employment patterns keep Garfield County's jobless rate high. On the other hand, in February, the county's unemployment rate peaked at 9.5 percent.

## Iron County

Early in the current recession, Iron County seemed to have worked through much of the employment loss related to a contracting construction market. However, in first quarter 2009, the county was hit by a second blow as the national recession took its toll on Iron County's large manufacturing sector. Between March 2008 and March 2009, Iron County lost more than 1,000 jobs, translating to a year-over employment decline of 6 percent.

Construction continued to account for almost half of the job losses. However, manufacturing joined the fray with a 200-job decline. In addition, professional/business services (which includes many temp services), leisure/hospitality services, and state government all lost substantial numbers of positions. In fact, the

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# County News (continued)

private education/health/social services industry was the only industry to create a significant number of new positions.

Construction permitting in both the residential and nonresidential courts continued to show substantial declines. However, the rate of decline seems to be ebbing somewhat. Unemployment remains high and sales continued to display double-digit declines in the first quarter of 2009 suggesting that the Iron County economy has not yet quite hit bottom.

## Kane County

As 2008 came to a close, Kane County managed to actually add jobs for the first time in nearly a year. Wham! This county, too, surrendered to national recessionary stresses. Between March 2008 and March 2009, Kane County's employment dropped by 5.4 percent representing almost 160 lost jobs.

Job declines in the tourist-related leisure/hospitality services industries proved responsible for the lion's share of this contraction—although the construction industry continues to shed employment. As in many counties, only healthcare and the public sector managed to generate any labor force gains.

Construction permitting continued to lose ground during the first five months of 2009. However, the losses appear to be getting smaller, suggesting that the worst is over in the industry. Unfortunately, gross taxable sales dropped by 20 percent between the first quarters of 2008 and 2009. In addition, a spike in initial unemployment claims during June suggests that the Kane County economy has yet to reach the end of the current downturn.

## Washington County

Washington County entered the current economic downturn earlier than the state and the nation. And, it may climb out of the recession in advance of both the state and nation too. Employment data from the first quarter of 2009 and survey data for the second quarter of 2009, suggest that Washington County job losses hit their worst point in February 2009 (down 9.7 percent). Until final second quarter 2009 numbers are available, we won't know for sure, but it appears that the county may have ended its economic downturn.

Other economic data support this proposition. While both construction permitting and sales are still showing year-over losses, these declines are shrinking—again suggesting that the economy has bottomed-out and is setting the stage for growth in coming months. Plus, initial claims for unemployment insurance have shown a steadily declining trend for the past several months.

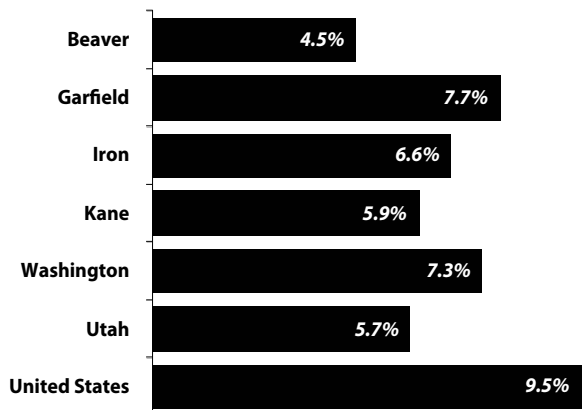
Between March 2008 and March 2009, the county lost roughly 4,800 positions—about 200 fewer than the previous month. Comparisons indicate most industry-level losses also bottomed-out in February 2009. The construction industry continued to take the majority of employment-loss responsibility although only healthcare services and government-generated employment gains.

**WFN**

For a more information about these counties, see:

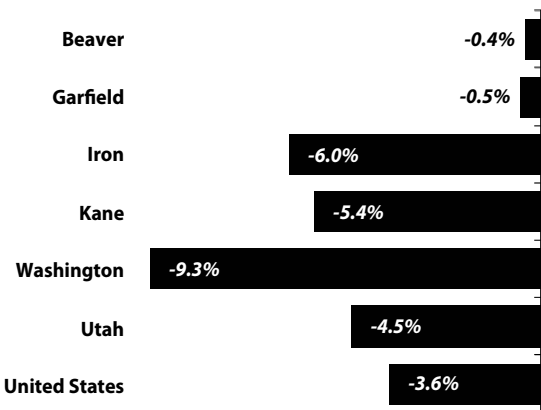
<http://jobs.utah.gov/countyinfo>

Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Rates  
June 2009



Source: Utah Dept. of Workforce Services; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Percent Change in Nonfarm Jobs  
March 2008 to March 2009



Source: Utah Dept. of Workforce Services; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

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